Import of rubber

463. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow import of rubber through all Indian ports by removing restrictions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Ban on import of plantation commodities

464. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the import of plantation commodities for re-export from the country by multinational companies has adversely affected the indigenous plantation industry especially tea industry in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government would impose a temporary ban on import of plantation commodities for re-export from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) In the case of plantation commodities tea, coffee and rubber, the import of the commodities for re-export has not affected the domestic industry for the reasons given below:

- In the case of tea, M/s. Hindustan Lever Ltd., which is also a 100% Export Oriented Unit (EOU), is the only multinational company importing tea into India for the purpose of re-export after making some value addition. No tea imported by the company is sold in the domestic market. Import of tea for re-export has been allowed in order to increase the price

competitiveness of Indian tea in the international market and also to cater to the requirements of international buyers which will help in boosting the Indian tea export. The imported teas have also to conform to the quality parameters as prescribed under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA). Moreover, the total quantum of tea imported into India is less than 2% of the total domestic production of tea.

- In the case of coffee, import of coffee in green bean form is carried out by the Export Oriented Units (EOUs) who re-export the same as value added products contributing to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The annual average quantum of coffee imports during the last five years is only about 2% of the annual average export of coffee.
- In the case of rubber, duty free import of natural rubber against advance licenses and for EOU/EPZ units is banned. There is no import of natural rubber into the country for re-export by the multinational companies.

In order to protect the Indian tea and coffee producers, the Government has increased the import duty on tea and coffee from 70% to 100%. There is no proposal at present to temporary ban import of tea and coffee for re-export from the country.

New EPZs in Rajasthan

465. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any proposals to set up Export Processing Zones in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are planning to bring new projects to increase the exports of marble and other materials from Rajasthan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to set up any Export Processing Zone by the Government of India, in Rajasthan.